SHRI R. KAMARAJ: My second supplementary is: What steps are being taken to safeguard the gas supply against any unforeseable happenings like fire, etc.?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Negotiations with Iraq for oil quota

*208. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether government have a proposal to send a team to urge Iraq to raise oil quota;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether imports under 'food for oil' have been dropped; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, sir. However, during the 15th session of the Indian — Iraq Joint Commission for economic and technical cooperation held at Baghdad on 6th and 7th July 2002, the issue of supply of Iraqi crude oil to India was discussed.

(c) and (d) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) had been sourcing crude oil fron M/s. SOMO, the national oil company of Iraq, under the UN approved "Oil for Food" programme upto December 2000. Recently, IOCL has requested M/s. SOMO to allocate crude oil under the "Oil for Food" programme, covering a period of six months from December 2002 onwards.

Artificial filling up of ground water in Gujarat

*210. DR. A. K. PATEL: Will the Miniser of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of sharp decline/shrinking of ground water table in most of the districts in Gujarat specially North Gujarat and Kutch-Saurashtra Region;

(b) if so, whether Government have launched any comprehensive plan to fill the ground water artificially to avoid servere water crisis in dought prone districts of Gujarat:

(c) if so, the funds earmarked for the implementation of the scheme; and